



Supervisor Herrity Joins Governor McDonnell in Calling for Relief to Localities

Task Force report contains common sense recommendations which will provide fiscal relief to localities and the Commonwealth and will enable both to more efficiently serve Virginia's residents.

Today at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, I joined Governor McDonnell at a press conference ([Governor's press release](#)) announcing legislation resulting from the Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review's [initial report](#). The statewide task force, which I was proud to chair, was charged with identifying and making recommendations on state mandates to localities with the aim of reducing financial and administrative burdens on local governments.

The Task Force recommended the elimination or modification of over 60 mandates. These recommendations are common sense, will provide fiscal relief to localities and the Commonwealth, and will enable both to more efficiently serve Virginia's residents.

These recommendations ranged from those with significant financial impact like

- Eliminating the requirement that localities must offer online SOL testing in middle schools. In Fairfax County alone this program costs over \$4 million to set up, then an additional \$4 million plus per year to run. While online testing is a worthwhile objective an additional \$4 million a year would enable FCPS to hire nearly 60 new teachers,

To those which increase efficiency,

- Allowing jails that are accredited by the American Correctional Association, which have identical standards as the Department of Corrections, to no longer have to be inspected by the Department of Corrections, assuming the accreditation is maintained. This prevents duplicative inspections and will ease the work burden of both local jails and the Department of Corrections.

Bills have been introduced in the 2012 General Assembly session at the request of the Governor and other legislators reflecting the vast majority of the Task Force recommendations. A sampling of these over 60 recommendations are at the bottom of this email.

These recommendations have taken on greater importance as the cumulative budget gaps in local governments likely exceed the budget gap experienced by the Commonwealth. The vast majority of localities are projecting revenue growth less than the Commonwealth's projected growth of 3.1%. After several very tough budget years, localities are in need of relief from state mandates and are not in a position to accept new ones. These recommendations should also result in reduced burden and fiscal relief for state agencies and the Commonwealth.

These recommendations are only the beginning of Task Force's work. We will continue developing recommendations to eliminate mandates and to reform the Commonwealth's local government mandate policies and to make recommendations on improving the state and local balance of funding and delivery of service.

I believe we have accomplished a lot in a short two month period and want to personally recognize and thank the Task Force members Joan Wodiska, Bob Dyer, Shaun Kenney, Kimball Payne and liaisons Alicia Hughes and Suzy Kelly, the over 70 local governments that provided suggestions, the over 35 state agencies that provided comment, and organizations like VML, VACo, VSBA, and VASS for their efforts in making this report possible. I also want to specifically recognize the support of the staff from the Commission on Local Government. Together this group worked as a team reacting to short deadlines, were creative and thorough with their input, and allowed us to move very quickly to produce this report in less than two months.

I am very happy that we have a Governor who understands the strains on local governments and has the desire to see those strains eased. I would like to say thank you to Governor McDonnell and Senator Newman for bringing the issue of state mandates on localities to light. It is refreshing to have leadership at the state level that understands the strains that these mandates have on local governments and are also willing to do something about it. I thank both of them for this great opportunity that will reap rewards to both localities and the state government for years to come.



Sample of the Task Force's Recommendations

The Task Force recommends:

- Eliminating the requirement that localities must offer online SOL testing in middle schools. In Fairfax County alone this program costs over \$4 million to set up, then an additional \$4 million plus a year to run. While online testing is a worthwhile objective an additional \$4 million per year would enable FCPS to hire nearly 60 new teachers.
- Eliminating the "Kings Dominion" rule and let local jurisdictions decide when the school year starts. The start time for schools should be tailored to each unique jurisdiction and its education needs.
- Eliminating the requirement that all secondary road projects must be approved by VDOT Central Office in Richmond even after they have been approved by regional VDOT offices. This is a clear case of duplicative efforts because regional offices follow the same guidelines as central office. This will cut back on significant staff hours at the state level and will allow for quicker approval times for secondary road projects saving local dollars.
- Modifying the requirement that localities have to buy space in newspapers to advertise requests for proposals for government contracts and instead can advertise them online and in public spaces. This would allow localities to save money and utilize technology that is much more efficient.
- Eliminate the requirement that all bus shelters constructed on VDOT roadways go through the Department of General Services permitting process; resulting in

administrative burden and lost ad revenues. Bus shelters are already constructed to Uniform Building Code criteria and the need to go through DGS was not apparent.

- Recommended reducing the number of reports that every school system must submit to the state by 15%. This would eliminate a significant amount of staff hours and would allow localities to focus resources into the classroom.
- Allowing jails that are accredited by the American Correctional Association, which have identical standards as the Department of Corrections, to no longer have to be inspected by the Department of Corrections, assuming the accreditation is maintained. This prevents duplicative inspections and will ease the work burden of both local jails and the Department of Corrections.
- Eliminating state inspections of erosion and sediment control programs where localities have already established inspections. This will save money for both the state and localities because it will prevent duplicative efforts and will allow localities to not have to facilitate state inspections.
- Eliminate the mandate that local governments submit Urban Development Area reports to the Commission on Local Government. Reports take immense staff hours to produce and by removing this mandate jurisdictions can re-direct those hours to areas of greater need. The reports, once submitted to the Commission on Local Government, served little use beyond a formal requirement, especially in small rural localities.